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CORRESPONDENCE.

Dr. Herman T. Lukens has written the following personal letter to the editor. It was with no thought of publication, but Dr. Lukens has kindly consented to let it appear in the *Journal*, without change :

My Dear Sir :

I have just been out to Chevy Chase to see Dr. Elmer Gates and his laboratory. The work on enlargement of the laboratory is still under way, so that I did not see things and apparatus in working order, but in heaps. He has raised the old building one story, and built a new first story. It is a fine situation on the same lot with his residence, with ground enough around for two or three new buildings besides a fine lawn. The property is his own, laboratory and all, but he has received donations of various amounts (I think he said \$320,000) from Mrs. Phebe Hurst and others to aid in special investigations. His work covers the whole range of the sciences. He has just invented a way of getting an electric current from the action of sunlight without the intervention of dynamo or engine. He started in on the study of looms some time ago, and in nine months had sixty-eight new inventions of improvements in the loom ; one of these inventions he disposed of for ten per cent. royalty, receiving \$62,000, with which he is building his new laboratory now. He employs a force of trained assistants, machinists, etc. His metallurgical room is for investigations in alloys. He proposes to make a complete series of 10,000 (or so) varying percentages of alloys of certain two metals, and test the properties of the alloys. He is at present on optics and acoustics. He proposes to put up a building in which will be museum, laboratory and all apparatus needed to demonstrate every known fact about sight or sound. Then he will take a class through by his method of work, which goes by regular stages : (1) Sensations, (2) Images, (3) Concepts, (4) Ideas, (5) Thoughts, 1st order, (6) Thoughts, 2nd order, (7) Thoughts, 3rd order. He aims to get as many different sensations as possible. Out of these come images of objects. These are grouped by likeness into concepts. Then the concepts are each to be related to every other one. He keeps going over and over the material trying to find relation of concepts systematically, *i. e.*, of every possible pair. He lays much stress upon this mechanical completeness of the system. He goes to bed at 8.30 and gets up at 5.30, works till 1 or 2, and gives afternoon to social life and relaxation.

He and his wife began to prepare themselves for parenthood a year or two before they created their last child. They avoided all onesided specialism and aimed to develop all the good emotions and exercise their minds on the whole round of human knowledge. During pregnancy his wife avoided all evil passions, anger, envy, etc., and cultivated good emotions, social and altruistic instincts, art, literature, dramas, the sublime in nature, heavens, the spirit of the cosmos, etc. The child was born at full time, without any pain, and the whole process of birth took only two and one-half hours. He has two bright children, on whom he has been trying various new ideas. The oldest at 21 months, he says, knew 11,000 words.

He is at work on sexual perversion, invisible rays of the spectrum,

conditions of work, etc. He has records for twenty years of his own activity and environment, atmospheric potential, electrical potential, barometer, wind, etc. He has an army of readers working for him in the gigantic task of sifting facts out of scientific books. He is trying to get all the alleged facts collected, and then test these and weed out the theories and mere "accepts," thus reducing the great mass of rubbish to a small compass of accessible facts,—a scientific Bible, as he says; for what is more sacred than truth, and what more satanic than falsehood? He showed me a great mass of manuscript material,—an attempt to work over the Standard Dictionary and extract the words that stand for new ideas in sound and light. These are on catalogue cards for purposes of classification, and filled several large drawers.

He has a great mass of notes that have been collecting for 20 years, and which he proposes to begin to edit in a series of books which will bring out his ideas better than anything else he has thus far done. These will include best regimen for work, scientific rearing of children, method of invention, encyclopædic Bible of science, etc.

Dr. Gates has a lovely home, into which he has put a large part of himself. It shows the man of ideas and of resources. He is affable and cordial, gave me unstintingly of his time and attention, and spoke freely of everything. He seems to me to have made a great mistake in not publishing, so as to get the criticism of fellow workers and the steadying influence of co-operation in investigations. But he is sincere, has the scientific spirit, and is a man of original ideas who will be more and more known as the years go by.